

11. GERMAN NOTES ON STREET FIGHTING

In view of the importance of the strong internal defense of towns under siege as demonstrated in Russia, the following notes on street fighting has particular significance at this time. The notes which follow are taken from a German handbook dated January 1939.

It is of interest to compare this article on German methods with British notes on street fighting contained in the next article.

a. Attack

(1) Towns will be surrounded, and water power and gas cut off.

(2) The enemy-occupied area will be attacked with the object of dividing it. These areas will then be isolated into as many pockets as possible, so as to deny the enemy freedom of movement.

(3) Attacking parties should move in the same direction along parallel streets. Parties moving in opposite directions create confusion and cause friendly troops to fire on each other.

(4) High buildings with commanding positions will be taken whenever possible.

(5) Flanking attacks should not be attempted.

(6) Troops should advance along both sides of the street, keeping close to the houses.

(7) Parties should also attack across roofs, and from house to house.

(8) In the streets, men will be detailed to watch roofs, windows, crossings, etc., on the side of the street opposite them.

(9) Single light machine guns can be moved along streets to open direct fire on points of resistance. To destroy large buildings, smaller guns than 150-mm are useless.

(10) Tanks will not be brought into towns.

(11) Areas occupied will be systematically searched.

b. Defense

(1) The enemy must not be able to pick out the main defense areas. These should therefore not be on the edge of the town, where strongpoints only should be used to threaten the enemy's flank.

(2) Important buildings must be defended from positions outside, and not from the building itself.

(3) The enemy should be driven into pockets, and any advanced elements cut off by sudden flank attacks.

(4) All windows will be left open so that the enemy will not know out of which window fire may come, and thus he will be unable to concentrate his own fire.

(5) Do not fire from the window-sill, but from a point as far back as possible.

(6) Remove tiles to make loopholes. Good positions can also be obtained behind chimneys.

(7) Barricades must be properly erected and well covered with fire.

(8) Use all means possible to keep streets illuminated at night.

12. BRITISH NOTES ON STREET FIGHTING

The following report on street fighting was taken from a lecture given by a British major to soldiers attending the Commando school.

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It is conceivable that one or more independent companies might, on occasion, be called upon to occupy a town or village held by an enemy garrison, and to hold it for a limited period against attack. Such an operation may be facilitated, and casualties lessened, by remembering certain lessons resulting from the street fighting which took place in the Spanish Civil War, especially around Madrid at the end of 1936 and the beginning of 1937.

The vital essentials of the attack are surprise and speed. If the enemy has any warning of the attack, he will very quickly be able to turn every house into a fort, and an independent company, lacking heavy artillery and air support, will find it very costly, if not impossible, to turn him out. The greatest care in planning, and the utmost secrecy are therefore necessary.

Once the attack is launched, the enemy must be kept continually on the run, and not given the least respite in which to rally and organize his resistance. Troops must be trained to display the greatest boldness and initiative, since the slightest hesitation may prove fatal to the whole operation; junior officers, especially, must combine a dare-devil recklessness with a cool head. In this type of warfare the motto is "Hit first, hit hard, and keep on hitting." Nothing is more demoralizing to the attackers than a long-drawn-out and indecisive battle in the streets.

When advancing along a street, troops should move in single file along both sides of the street, keeping close to the walls and with an interval of about

3 yards between each man. Each man should watch the windows and doorways of the houses opposite, and be prepared to engage enemy snipers. It may also be expedient to place an automatic rifle or light machine gun at street crossings to give effective covering fire. When movement is possible along the roofs of the houses, picked snipers of special agility and marksmanship should be sent up to the rooftops to cover the advance below. Never approach a doorway into a house, or a room, directly from the front. If there is an enemy behind it he is sure to see you several seconds before you can see him, and he will shoot first. Approach from one side, hugging the wall; then take one or two hand grenades and throw them inside, and follow on in yourself immediately after the explosion, with pistol or rifle at the ready--the pistol is to be preferred. It is fairly certain that if the grenades do not actually kill or seriously wound the defenders, they will knock them out for a few seconds at least.

A house that is strongly defended will have to be taken floor by floor, or even room by room; hence the danger of allowing the enemy to organize any resistance; but once a house has been entered, and fighting is proceeding on the upper floors, the attackers should post one or two men on the ground floor to watch the street and guard against surprise.

Strong resistance in houses is best reduced by working round the flanks towards the rear, and thus enclosing the several defense areas in a number of small pockets which can be reduced one by one.

Mortars, both light and heavy, are most effective in street fighting, owing to their extreme accuracy, the highly demoralizing effect of their bombs, and their rapidity of fire. They are especially useful against street barricades.

Finally, it must be emphasized that a small attacking force in street fighting cannot afford to take prisoners; it is too easy for them to escape and, having escaped, to do great damage to their captors. Furthermore, men cannot be spared for escort.

13. TACTICS ON GUADALCANAL AND NEW GUINEA

The following notes on Japanese tactics were made after observation of fighting on Guadalcanal.

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The Japanese is a night fighter. He does not move or attack in the daylight, or even in moonlight. He waits till a dark night, moves in close, and attempts, by infiltration, to seep through a weak spot in the line. He then attempts to create confusion and thereby allow other Japanese troops to enter the line. Presumably, in case of a breakthrough, he would consolidate the next day, and prepare for another attack. In case of a rout, he would undoubtedly